

CHARLES FROHMAN ALONE IN HIS FIELD

Placed the Theatrical Business
on a High Plane of Com-
mercial Honor.

BUILDER OF THE STAGE

When word was received at the Empire Theatre yesterday that the body of Charles Frohman had been found there came verification of the fears of Mr. Hayman, John D. Williams and Mr. Frohman's other close business associates, who had held little hope of his escape after the news was received of the sinking of the Lusitania. Mr. Frohman never recovered from an attack of pneumonia he suffered two years ago. It had been necessary for him to walk with a cane. Although he had recovered from the worst of the stiffness of one knee, but he could not move about freely, so it was scarcely to be conceived that he would be alert enough to quit the liner in time to save his life.

Mr. Frohman was almost the first of a type of theatre managers which may be practically said to have disappeared with him, or almost before him, since he had during the last few years lost many of the characteristics which had been distinguishing during the early years of his career. He controlled at the time of his death only two theatres in New York, the Empire, always his especial pride, and the Lyceum Theatre, which he had acquired in 1908. He was associated with Klaw & Erlinger in the management of the Knickerbocker. When it is recalled that he was at one time in control of a dozen or more theatres here it will be realized how he decreased his personal activity. He owned controlling interests in important theatres in Chicago and Boston.

The theatrical Napoleon ended with Charles Frohman, just as it had begun with him. Managers have realized that greater concentration of interest is more advantageous. Mr. Frohman, with such stage favorites as Maude Adams, Ethel Barrymore, Billie Burke, Blanche Bates, Marie Doro, Julia Sanderson, Ann Murdock, John Drew, William Gillette, Gus Skinner, Donald Brian and Joseph Cawthorne and with his successful New York theatres, was in effect much more of a Napoleon than he was in some of his efforts to swing the far more extensive enterprises of former years.

\$25,000 a Week Salaries.

One season—and it was by no means his most active—made twenty-five stage productions, employed 792 actors and actresses during a period of from thirty to forty weeks and was liable for salaries amounting to more than \$25,000 a week. Up to the close of the season three years ago he had produced more than 600 plays altogether. It may be roughly estimated since that time he has produced here and in London at least sixty more, so there has been after all something Napoleonic in his career, even if his later years were less notable for the extent of his enterprises.

Much more than that Charles Frohman did for the profession to which he was so much attached. He placed his reputation for the highest business rectitude. Like all men who operate on such a scale, Mr. Frohman had his fat and his lean years. But it should never be said that he failed to meet every business responsibility in the most honorable way. The theatrical business when he entered it was a fly by night, unregulated, speculative and more or less vagabond occupation, which paid when the money came in—not always then—and had no other resources. But Charles Frohman and the men who were associated with him put the profession for the first time on a business basis. No banker could have been prouder of his commercial honor than Charles Frohman.

But there was no feeling in his life as strong as his devotion to theatrical management for its own sake. He gloried in his work. He found few pleasures not associated with it. He never took a vacation which carried him far from the theatre. When he was not seeing plays he was reading them or talking about them. For plays were always the necessity of his life. With stars to supply and theatres to fill he had to have the kind which would please the public. He lost thousands of dollars in the Repertory Theatre he founded in London merely in the hope that such an institution would develop new play-wrights. He was negotiating with actors or watching them from the back of a box or directing them at rehearsal all the time. When he might have been at this production or that never occurred to him particularly except as a means of continuing his enterprises. Of his importance as a manager he thought constantly. But of what he might earn as a theatre manager was something to which he gave little attention.

In Newspaper Office.

It was his meteoric beginning which made him so much in love with the profession he had entered. Born in 1860 at Sandusky, N. Y., he came to New York and obtained employment in the publication office of the New York Tribune. His older brother, Daniel, was already in the Tribune office. The entire family was soon established here and Charles worked at night in the office and attended in the day the Fifth Street school. This continued until 1873. One of the memories of that day, the minstrel company which he formed on the East Side, acting as manager, ticket seller, head usher and stage manager. This was his first experience in a commercial theatre, since he charged a cent to come in. Those who were not content to be mere spectators and wanted a chance to act were compelled to pay 5 cents.

Later the youthful Frohman went to the office of the *Graphic*, where Daniel had been successful himself. The work was not sufficiently absorbing and he found time to serve as usher at Nipper's Theatre in Brooklyn at night. Eventually this taste of the professional theatre decided his career. For 1880 he left the office of the *Graphic* and went to Minerva to take a place with the Chicago Dramatic Company.

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Already his skill had interested Hayman, who at that time had a large interest in the theatre. He had been associated with the Malloy brothers when they decided to invest some of the profits of the *Churchman* in the Madison Square Theatre. There Charles went to aid in settling the book-keeping of the companies that acted "Tazel Kirk" and other plays from this theatre on the road. This was the period in which the so-called "combination system" gave the old stock companies the

coup de grace, and Charles Frohman disclosed great business acumen. He organized four minstrel companies and sent them over the country. He took the Wallack company on its first tour, acting "Moths" and other dramas in which the public persistently refused to become interested. In 1886 when the Malloys retired from management Mr. Frohman took the Lyceum Theatre company to San Francisco and with Al Hayman formed the Western circuit, which ultimately became a part of the general theatrical organization. In this way he acquired a great experience of the business side of the theatre.

It was in 1887 with the acquisition of Bronson Howard's successful war play "Shenandoah" that the period of the Frohman financial prosperity began, as his experience up to this time had not brought him any great returns. He saw the play, which had made no particular success at its first performance in Boston. He was impressed with its possibilities and sought the financial cooperation of Mr. Hayman in bringing the rights to it. Mr. Hayman at first consented, then withdrew. When he heard that Mr. Frohman had been able to secure the partnership of Fred Hunt Pardee, he turned to the proposition and the two bought the play, which made a fortune for each of them and yielded Bronson Howard a large sum of money.

Now Charles Frohman could take his place among the managers of the day. He bought the American rights to "Ben Hur," which he called in the adaptation made by William Gillette "All the Comforts of Home," and that succeeded. He put a stock company—by which he was indeed Maude Adams—into the present Proctor's Twenty-third Street Theatre and there acted "Men and Women," by Belasco and "The Lost Paradise," by Ludwig Fulda. He organized a comedy company which first appeared in "Mr. Wilkinson's Widow," an adaptation of the comedy of Moliere, "Le Toupinelle," and that was another success. "Shadows of a Great City," "Thermidor," by Sardou, and other plays were acted at the Twenty-third Street Theatre. Another success among his comedies was "Jane," with Johnstone Bennett in the leading role. Out of "Charles's Aunt" he made another fortune in this country.

He acquired the Empire Theatre, which was built for him by Al Hayman, William Harris and Frank Senger, and one by one added to the theatres which he controlled. Then he decided to attempt management in London, and while he controlled there one time as many as four different theatres, he had given them all up but the Duke of York's. It was indeed in connection with a suit over this theatre that he sailed for Europe by the Lusitania. He was one of the six founders of the so-called theatrical trust.

He made his productions, dramatic and musical, of the highest quality, and to other managers, and only in recent years had he diminished his activity to a more conservative basis. He was always much more successful in his plays of American origin after "Shenandoah." He was the most liberal patron that the French playwrights ever had in this country and he paid them the highest royalties.

He was a close friend of James M. Barrie, from whom he had received the play which made more money for him than any other single drama, "Peter Pan."

It rarely happened that he took any of his stars from any other manager. Ethel Barrymore, Maude Adams and Blanche Adams, above all the most popular actresses on the American stage, were never stars until he put them in his plays. He was the one who made them stars. He was the one who made them stars. He was the one who made them stars.

Just as his life was altogether absorbed with the theatre, so he sought his diversion among those who could interest him in various phases of his profession. He loved the society of the playwrights whose work he had taken and loved to talk with them. His closest personal friend, with whom he passed many hours, was Paul M. Potter, the playwright. His last letter, so far as is known at present, was written from the Lusitania to Mr. Potter, who had been with him until the disaster. He had been with him until the disaster. He had been with him until the disaster.

But he saw few persons not associated with the theatre, had no interest in any phase of life not concerned with his profession and was unknown even to the sight to many of the actors who daily saw him passing from his office in the Empire Theatre to the Knickerbocker Hotel, where he had made his home for several years.

Mr. Frohman was never married, although there were repeated rumors that he and Maude Adams were married. His wife, his two brothers, Daniel and Gustave, survive him, and there are four sisters, three of whom are unmarried. The theatrical Napoleon was never averse to relating stories of his early struggles, which were sufficiently numerous before the success of "Shenandoah." One of these he told last winter during the successful run of "Diplomacy" at the Empire Theatre.

"I had a company playing in 'Diplomacy' he said, 'and business was so bad that it was impossible to pay salaries promptly enough to keep the players. So one afternoon I would leave up. All we could do was to keep right on, headed more or less directly for Chicago. We had a wonderful way of dropping out of the company. 'She has just been here' one of the characters would say, 'and what she said to go right along with the speech. We had a photograph of a man, too, and by the dexterous use of these and other expedients we were able to get the company home, and at the end of the week the audience interested in 'Diplomacy'."

Once when he had returned to this city from an unsuccessful tour, of which he was the manager, here was an inspector in the Westinghouse plant here until a week ago and went abroad to claim an estate of an uncle in County Roscommon, Ireland.

with it. But it was late when he got back, the offices were closed and there seemed every probability that the good dinner would have to be postponed until the next morning. He was walking up Broadway and met an old time comedian, who had once been in one of his companies. His greeting was cordial. "And now, Charley," said the comedian, "you've got to come to dinner with me. We have a new club, a little club for actors only, but we have the best roast beef in town and make a specialty of a substantial, homelike dinner. Come right along."

The club rooms were over Miliken's saloon, which was on the west side of Broadway, between Thirty-first and Thirty-second streets. The two went up to the room and sat down. The actor ordered dinner for two. The waiter went away and Frohman's spirits began to rise.

"It's the best roast beef in New York, I tell you," said the host, by way of an answer to the comedian's remark.

Then the waiter reappeared, but not with the food. He was visibly embarrassed. "Sorry, sir," he said to the comedian, "but the steward tells me that you can't have dinner tonight. He says you were posted to-day and that you can't be served any more until everything is settled."

Charles Frohman used to tell this story and say that he never had such an appetite for roast beef as he would have had if he had been in the room when he rose from that table to go out again into Broadway.

Broken Hearted, Says Belasco.

David Belasco, for many years associated with Charles Frohman, yesterday said to a reporter for The Sun: "I am broken hearted—my dear, dear friend, my nearest and dearest friend. It is horrible to think that a man who was held in universal esteem and affection, who had the warm heart of a child, who gave employment to hundreds, should have been done to death by such sheer brutality!"

There was and is only one C. F. He was more for the theatre than any other man. He was in touch with the authors of the universe. He took America over to England and brought England back to us. He filled a unique position in all countries and belonged to the whole world, which will grieve for him as I do now.

My heart goes out to his brothers and sisters, to Miss Maude Adams and all those associated with him, because his place can never be taken and they must forever mourn his loss. If long nights' vigil and tears could bring him back, Charlie would be with us now.

If this be war, to take a life so useful and so precious, then I would like the chance to put a musket to my shoulder and shoot down the fiend who conceived the idea."

MISS ADAMS GRIEVES

AT FROHMAN'S DEATH

Actress Collapses and Gives
Kansas City Performance
With Difficulty.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., May 8.—Miss Maude Adams learned of the death of Charles Frohman when she reached the Grand Theatre this afternoon for the first time. She was in the city for a performance of "The Sign of the Cross." She collapsed, but revived and was persuaded to go on with the performance after some delay.

In the first act Miss Adams showed plainly the shock which she had suffered and her voice broke repeatedly. As the play progressed she gained control over herself and played the role with her usual abandon. After the performance she refused to see any one, but drove directly to her private car.

It was Miss Adams' wish not to appear at tonight's performance, but when the house manager told her that since she had been in the city it would not be possible to refund the money to the audience she consented to appear again. The strain under which she was working was apparent throughout the performance.

Through her manager, W. G. Newman, Miss Adams denied the rumors that she was married to Mr. Frohman.

"Of course," Mr. Newman said, "a warm affection had sprung up between them in the years in which they had been associated with each other, and the fact that neither had ever married, no doubt gave rise to the absurd reports."

At that time the full list of those saved was not available, and the father waited half an hour in the hope of receiving news. He was obliged finally to leave in uncertainty. Not until later in the day was positive word received that his son was among those saved.

Sailed on Another Ship.

SUMMIT, N. J., May 8.—Although the names of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wilson are contained in the despatches as having been aboard the Lusitania, Mrs. Wilson's family declared to-day that reservations made by the couple had been cancelled and they had sailed on the New York of the American Line last Saturday.

Woman Sailed to Claim Estate.

BLOOMFIELD, N. J., May 8.—The relative of Miss Marie McGovern of Dodd street, who was a passenger on the Lusitania, was very anxious. The young woman was an inspector in the Westinghouse plant here until a week ago and went abroad to claim an estate of an uncle in County Roscommon, Ireland.

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Women's
Woven Underwear

The new assortments comprise the most desirable styles and weights for present wear or the warm Summer days, and include Betaiph Underwear (exclusive to B. Altman & Co.), as well as an especially fine showing of Woven Silk Undergarments, among them being combinations for wearing under or over the corset; Envelope Chemises, Knicker Skirts, Corset Covers, Bloomers and Tights, all from the foremost American and European makers.

SEASONABLE MERCHANDISE AT SALE PRICES FOR MONDAY

Women's Ready-to-wear Dep't
(Third Floor)
Reductions have been made in the prices of
Several Hundred
Women's Spring Suits

This Sale will afford an opportunity for purchasing fashionable
Tailor-made Suits at
\$21.50, \$26.50 & \$31.50
These prices being much lower than usual.

Important Reductions
have been effected in the prices of a number of
HIGH-COST COTTON AND LINEN
DRESSES

Imported and American-made. These are now offered, on the Third Floor, at
\$48.00, 55.00, 78.00 & 85.00

A limited number of dainty Frocks (sizes incomplete), the remainder of a recent special purchase, have been marked at the reduced prices of
\$9.75, 11.00, 32.00 & 38.00

Exceptional Values are offered, in the Dress Goods Department, in
Sports & Walking Skirts
(semi-made) of homespun, coverts, voiles and fancy checks, at
\$5.75, \$6.50 & \$8.50

These Skirts are made in the fashionable flare models, and are eminently desirable for town, country and general sports wear.

Women's Pique Suits
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Regular Price, \$35.00
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B. Altman & Co.

FIFTH AVENUE - MADISON AVENUE
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Thirty-fifth Street

Fasso Corsets

made in Paris for B. Altman & Co., and indorsed by the leading French couturiers, are skillfully designed to meet every requirement of the new mode in gowning.

Made of coutil and finer materials, the prices of Fasso Corsets range from \$10.50 to \$25.00 and upward.

French Corsets of other makes, and French Brassieres in many styles, are also in stock.

Expert fitters in attendance.

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On TUESDAY,

May 11th

A Specially-prepared Sale of Bungalow and Morning Dresses

will constitute a highly important and seasonable event, affording an unusual opportunity for purchasing attractive and eminently useful Summer Dresses, made of fancy white crepes, dainty lawns and voiles, striped madras, pique and linen, at the extraordinarily low prices of

\$2.00, \$3.00, \$3.85 & \$4.25

(Department on the Second Floor)

"Petit Trianon" Dresses & Skirts

in a variety of attractive models made up in pretty flowered prints and cretonnes, are an interesting novelty just introduced by B. Altman & Co. These dainty Summer garments will prove both comfortable and picturesque for the beach or the country.

English-type Smocks, trimmed to match the "Petit Trianon" Skirts, over which they may be worn, are also being shown.

Bathing Costumes

that will appeal to the smart woman are shown in most interesting variety in the spacious Department on the Third Floor. Everything that is new and chic in design, material and color scheme, is featured in this alluring collection, which represents the most advanced ideas of the best designers in Europe and America.

Imported Lingerie

made of the finest and sheerest fabrics and exhibiting the most delicate hand-wrought needlework, is shown in exclusive designs that must infallibly appeal to the woman of taste and refinement. Paris-made Nightrobes, Chemises, Combinations, Petticoats, etc., exquisitely embroidered and trimmed with real Valenciennes lace, are among the dainty Undergarments included in the collection.

New shipments of Hand-embroidered Lingerie imported from the Philippine Islands are shown in the same Department.

A Spring Sale of Silk Parasols

will present a most attractive selection, including novelty and regulation shapes, the newest colors and color combinations, and some very smart effects in black-and-white; also a number of the shirred and Japanese Parasols that are to be in vogue. All of these will offer remarkable value . . . at \$2.85

Also Silk Taffeta Parasols in all the fashionable colors; with 10-rib frame and ebonized stick, special at \$2.00

Silk Petticoats for Summer
(featuring the new flare styles)

will be offered at decidedly low prices, considering their desirability. Tub Silk Petticoats, in striped effects and plain white . . . at \$3.85

Silk Taffeta Petticoats (largest quality) in white and plain . . . with a circular, ruffled flounce . . . at \$4.75

Crepe de Chine Petticoats, in pink and pale blue, trimmed with plaited ruffles of chiffon; and coats in Pompadour silk, trimmed with scalloped embroidered ruffles . . . each \$2.25

Safety Storage for Furs, Robes and Draperies
Furs and Fur Garments repaired and remodeled

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